**World War One :**

**A Soldiers Record**

What can we find out?

**Introduction**

On the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Britain sent many soldiers to fight in France and Belgium, known as the 'Western Front'. Men came from all classes of society. Some were already in the army when war started and many others volunteered to fight as soon as war broke out. However, as the war dragged on, conscription was introduced in 1916 and men had to join the army. Coming from various backgrounds and experiences, soldiers reacted differently to the horrors of war and life as a soldier.

Their behaviour and conduct as soldiers was written down in their individual service papers.

This lesson focuses on Donald Campbell, a young Scottish man who joined the army on 10th August 1903. He was 18 years and 4 months old. Here you can examine his service papers. As Private Campbell joined the army years before the outbreak of war, it is important to work out what he did and where he went. Where did he come from? What was he like? Was he a good soldier? Use these military records to find the answers to these questions.

Tasks

1. You need to decide what makes a good soldier.

a) Think about your personal responses to the questions posed below.

• Does a good soldier always obey his orders?

• How would a good soldier act?

• What would a good soldier be prepared to do?

• Would a good soldier ever get drunk?

• Why is it difficult to decide what makes a good soldier?

b) Write a paragraph, expressing your own opinions, under the title 'My

requirements to be a good soldier'

Look at Source 1

2. This source shows part of a disciplinary record.

a) Why is this important to see this record?

b) Look at the titles carefully - what is the fourth column for?

c) What does this suggest about expectations? (Think - would you expect this

title to be part of an official form?)

Look at Source 2, 3 and 4

3. These records show Donald Campbell's charges.

a) How old was Private Campbell by 1913?

b) What was Private Campbell found guilty of in Glencorse on 15th January

1913?

c) Using information from all three extracts, what offences was Campbell found

guilty of throughout his military career?

d) In your opinion, how serious were these offences?

Look at Source 5

4. This is Donald Campbell's employment sheet.

a) What do you think the initials in the 'military character' column stand for?

b) How is Campbell described in December 1913?

c) How is he described six months later?

d) What evidence is there in this source to show that his behaviours changed

between 1913 and 1914?

Look at Source 6

5. This is Donald Campbell's Casualty record.

a) Why is this source useful to us?

b) When and where was Private Campbell wounded in action?

c) What happened a day later?

6. Using all the source evidence you have examined, look back at your 'requirements to be a good soldier'.

a) Would it be possible for a historian to suggest that Campbell was not a good

soldier?

b) What evidence could a historian use to suggest that Campbell was a good

soldier?

c) In 200 words explain your own opinion of Private Donald Campbell - was he a

good soldier? Back your ideas up with clearly explained source evidence.

Make sure you examine both viewpoints before reaching your final conclusions.